

REMARKS

The Final Office Action mailed March 29, 2004, has been carefully reviewed and by this Amendment, Applicant has amended claims 1, 8 and 12. Claims 1-4 and 6-14 are pending. This Amendment is timely filed within two months of the mailing date of the Final Action.

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 8, 9 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,473,664 to Lee et al. ("Lee") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,505,248 to Casper et al. ("Casper"). The Examiner also rejected claims 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13 and 14 as being unpatentable over Lee in view of Casper, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,432,715 to Shigematsu et al. ("Shigematsu").

As set forth in amended claims 1 and 12, the present invention provides a semiconductor factory automation (FA) system capable of monitoring, *in real-time*, each processor coupled to semiconductor equipments, respectively, and, as set forth in claim 8, a method for monitoring the server in the semiconductor FA system and displaying the server state information *in real time*. Through such real-time monitoring of the operational state of one or more processors, the present invention is able to prevent associated semiconductor wafers from being inappropriately processed in the semiconductor equipment when the processor coupled to the semiconductor equipment is in an error state. This is not shown by the prior art.

Lee is directed to a manufacturing process automation system with centralized storage of job result data within a file server so that a plurality of machines coupled to the server can access and share the job result data. As acknowledged by the Examiner, there is no monitoring

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of processors coupled to semiconductor equipments, nor display of status information relating to the processors, disclosed or suggested in Lee.

Casper is directed to a system in which state information related to each server is monitored and thereafter stored in a database. This is contrary to the present invention in which the state information is first stored in a real-time database and then retrieved from such database by the monitoring means for display. The managing server of Casper does not monitor the processing means *in real time* and therefore is not comparable to the monitoring means of the present invention.

Finally, there is nothing in Shigematsu that discloses or suggests a real-time database to which state information is first input and then subsequently retrieved by the monitoring means. Instead, the monitoring system in Shigematsu classifies a state message into important and unimportant messages, and directly receives the state message from each server, i.e., computer. By contrast, according to the present invention, processor state information is first input to a real-time database, after which the monitoring means retrieves the processor state information that was stored and the display means displays the server state information retrieved in real time.

Thus, for at least the foregoing reasons, claims 1, 8 and 12 are patentable over the prior art. Claims 2-4, 6, 7, 9-11, 13 and 14 are also in condition for allowance as claims properly dependent on an allowable base claim and for the subject matter contained therein. Favorable consideration is requested.

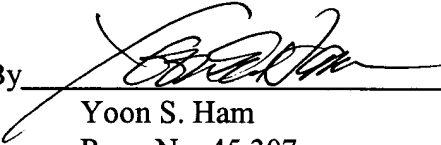
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In that the amendments contained herein are of a clarifying nature, and do not raise new issues, entry thereof is proper after Final Action and is requested. Furthermore, with this Amendment, the application is in condition for allowance.

Should the Examiner have any questions or comments, the Examiner is cordially invited to telephone the undersigned attorney so that the present application can receive an early Notice of Allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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